

World Wetlands Day Activity Report
Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, Inc

The annual celebration of World Wetlands Day is an ideal venue for communicating this year's theme Forests for Water and Wetlands. The connection between forests, water and wetlands is clearly emphasized in the SCPW's enrichment plantation/reforestation project - the [Rehabilitation of the Arayat Watershed for the Protection of Candaba Wetlands](#). This is being implemented through the "tree-preneurship" approach wherein the participating upland farmers/families are trained to be tree-preneurs.

The SCPW celebrated the World Wetlands Day on 03 February 2011 around the concept of [Wetlands Caravan](#), the evolving CEPA Programme of SCPW for wetland conservation. The celebration had three components: a bird watching activity, a Community Learning Forum, and a visit to the tree-preneurs' backyard nurseries.

1. Bird Watching at Candaba Wetlands

A bird watching activity is effective in communicating awareness and promoting appreciation of the many functions and services of the Candaba swamp.

The Candaba Swamp is important in the flood control, acting as a natural flood retention basin during rainy season, holding the overflow from the many rivers of Arayat. The swamp is also an important staging and wintering area for thousands of migratory birds.

2. Community Learning Forum

More than a hundred upland farmers in Mount Arayat gathered for the Forum on "Forests and Wetlands: The Wetland-Forest Connection". It aimed to increase the awareness and appreciation of the local population on the importance of the Mount Arayat forest cover in the maintenance of the ecosystem integrity of the Arayat-Candaba watershed and most importantly, the connection between Mount Arayat and Candaba Wetlands.

3. Backyard Nurseries Visit

A visit to the backyard nurseries of the tree-preneurs was the third component of the celebration and was ended by an Open Forum where concerns and problems encountered by tree-preneurs in their backyard nursery development were raised and discussed.

Joining the event were Ms. Jocelyn Esguerra, the National Coordinator of United Nations Development Programme - GEF SGP; Mr. Leovino Ignacio, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer of Pampanga; Mr. Ruel Nucup, President of the Maria Sinukuan Upland Farmers Association; Ms. Joy Isla and Ms. Liza Vengco of the Unilever Philippines; Mr. Rommel Santiago, the Protected Area Superintendent for the Mount Arayat National Park, and Dr. Llewellyn Young, the Ramsar Regional Advisor for Asia and the Pacific.

Details of the event can be viewed at the WWD page of the SCPW website <http://www.psdn.org.ph/wetlands/2011wwd.htm>

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